

CARE & MAINTENANCE

Towing adds strain and stress to your car. You'll find you use more gas and oil; tires and parts wear faster. It's wise to have regular safety checks, tune-ups and lubrications.

ENGINE

Because your car's engine has to work harder, you may find it overheats on long grades. If your radiator begins to overheat, don't stop and idle or turn off the engine. What you should do is pull off to the shoulder of the road, shift to neutral, then step on the accelerator so your engine is idling fast. The fan then causes more air to be taken in, and cools the engine faster.

FRAME

Before each trip, check the frame, rollers, winch, cable, tilting locks, safety chain, straps, ropes, wiring, lights and hitch. Use a wrench and screw driver to tighten nuts and screws.

RADIATOR AND TIRES

If you use your car often for towing, consider having a heavy-duty radiator and heavy-duty rear tires. See your tire dealer and find out from him how much extra tire pressure your extra load needs.

If you're renting a trailer, make sure the tires are in good shape and are suitable for road conditions.

If you own a light trailer and haul light loads, tires may show little wear, yet dry out with age. Check them often for cracks or splits in the walls.

LUBRICATION

Keep wheel bearings well lubricated. Lack of lubrication can cause wheel drag — even a sheared axle!

Use heavy, fiber-type wheel bearing grease on the hitch-ball. Carry extra with you. Springs and shackles need lubrication too.

After you've backed your trailer into the water to launch or haul up your boat, dry it out as soon as possible, and lubricate.

HIGHWAY CHECK LIST

After the first few miles of travel, stop and carefully check the load and fastenings, the hitch and attachments, the lights and the trailer wheel bearings. A similar check should be made at regular intervals when on a trip.

INSURANCE

You are liable for damage or injury caused by your trailer. Check with your insurance company and make sure you are properly protected.

CLINIC FOR TRAILER PROBLEMS

PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTION	PROBLEM	CAUSE	SOLUTION
Boat pitches while being towed.	Wheels of trailer set too far forward, or load too far aft.	Move axle assembly about four inches aft; transfer some of load farther forward.	Trailer "fishtails" and sways back and forth when travelling at high speeds.	Too much weight in rear of trailer; or one tire may be lower than other; axle and wheels may be set too far forward; or weak bumper hitch may allow flexing.	Redistribute weight in trailer; equalize inflation in both tires; or replace bumper hitch with frame-mounted hitch. If these three factors are not the fault, move axle assembly four to six inches aft.
Trailer sways from side to side.	Insufficient inflation of trailer tires on one side or both sides; or broken or weak springs.	Inflate tires to pressure recommended by dealer; replace springs.	Grinding and screeching noises from trailer.	Lack of lubrication, high temperature or overloading, causing chafing of wheel bearings.	Pull off to side of road and check bearings. Pull wheel to determine if bearings have plenty of grease. If not, dry and rough, install new bearings and races.
Trailer touches bottom on rough roads, driveways and ruts.	Trailer hitch mounted too low, or too much weight on trailer tongue; low pressure on rear car tires; or weak car springs.	Trailer tongue weight should equal 10% of total weight, if weight is correct, check car springs and shock absorbers; if defective, replace with heavy-duty springs. Check inflation of car tires; when towing, carry 4-6 p.s.i. over normally recommended inflation.	Clattering and clumping noises from trailer.	Loose hitch ball; loose hitch clamp; or loose wheel lug nuts.	Tighten hitch ball. Pull hub caps to check for loose lug nuts. Tighten all bolts.



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS ONTARIO
HON. CHARLES MacNAUGHTON, MINISTER

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TRAILER-WISE

A guide to
legal and safe
operation
of trailers
in Ontario
for
passenger car
owners

Government
Publications

THE LAW & YOUR TRAILER

This section provides a brief outline of the laws relating to the operation of trailers in Ontario. For more detailed information refer to the Ontario Highway Traffic Act and Regulations.

REGISTRATION

Your trailer is considered a separate vehicle from your automobile. Before you use it on a street or highway, you must register it and pay the registration fee to the Ontario Department of Transportation and Communications. Quarter-year registration is available for trailer.

Your trailer registration plate must be fastened on the back of your trailer so that it is clearly visible.

SIZE

Maximum length 35 feet, Maximum height 13½ feet, Maximum width 102 inches, Maximum length-car and trailer-65 feet.

Should your combination of vehicles and load exceed the above limits, you must secure an Oversize Permit for its operation from the Oversize-Overweight Permit Section, Ontario Department of Transportation and Communications.

BRAKES

If your trailer has a gross weight (vehicle and load) of 3000 pounds or more, it must have brakes strong enough to stop and hold it.

LIGHTS AND REFLECTORS

On a highway at any time when lights are required by law: Your trailer registration plate must be illuminated by a white light. Your trailer must have one red lighted lamp on the rear.

IN ADDITION

If your trailer is not wider than 80 inches.... it must have an approved red reflector on the left rear.

If your trailer is wider than 80 inches but not wider than 102 inches....

it must have two lighted clearance lamps, one on each side of the front, which display an amber light, and two lighted clearance lamps, one on each side of the rear, which display a red light. (Department-approved reflectors may be used instead of the rear clearance lights.) All such lamps and reflectors must be affixed within six inches of the side of the vehicle.

It must also be equipped with mechanical or electrical signalling devices.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- Your trailer must be equipped with mudguards, fenders, flap(s) or body structure to reduce road spray.
- You must load carefully to ensure that nothing comes loose or falls off while you are moving.
- If the load obstructs your vision to the rear, you must have a mirror attached to the car in a position to provide a clear view of the roadway to the rear other than through the rear window.
- It is against the law to draw more than one vehicle behind your car.
- You must ensure that your trailer is in a safe operating condition. A Police Constable may remove vehicles from the road until they are put in a safe operating condition.
- Your trailer must have two separate means of attachment so that, if one fails, the trailer will not become detached.
- It is against the law to carry anyone in a house or boat trailer when it is being operated on a highway.

LOADING HINTS

Consider the size, power and condition of your car before you attempt to tow a trailer.

Don't overload: Besides putting a strain on you and your car, you can bend your trailer axle, with too much weight. The rear springs and shocks were not designed to carry a greater load than can normally be carried in the vehicle.

Ten to 15 percent of the weight of your trailer should be on the hitch. The proper balance is secured only when the weight on the hitch permits the trailer floor to remain in a level position.

Your trailer will "fish-tail" if the weight is not distributed properly.

Heavy and improperly placed loads can pull down the rear of your car. This lifts the front end and headlights, so that your low beams may blind approaching drivers. Mirrors are thrown out-of-line and steering may be affected too.

Strap everything down, inside as well as outside the trailer.

HITCH

Use a good trailer hitch. The hitch-ball should be installed so that when the trailer is attached and tightened, it rides on a horizontal plane, with no tilting. If the hitch pulls down the rear of your car, ask your dealer to supply you with a load equalizing trailer hitch.

Be sure your trailer hitch is properly bolted to the car frame, has the correct coupling, and has sturdy safety chains.

Distribute load evenly . . . keep weight as low on the floor as possible and, as nearly as possible, directly over the axle.

In boat towing, place the heaviest load where the hull support is greatest . . . usually directly over the keel. Be sure the rollers and hull supports are adjusted to give even support at all points. Uneven support can damage the hull.

When not towing a vehicle the registration plate must be clearly visible. Do not obscure the plate with the hitch.

SPECIAL DRIVING TECHNIQUES FOR TOWING

STARTING: Accelerate carefully. Take it slowly and easily.

TAKING CURVES: Stay close to the middle of your lane.

TURNING

RIGHT TURN: Look in your right mirror. Signal, slow down. If turn is sharp, move ahead until car's front wheels are well ahead of curb... then turn to the right.

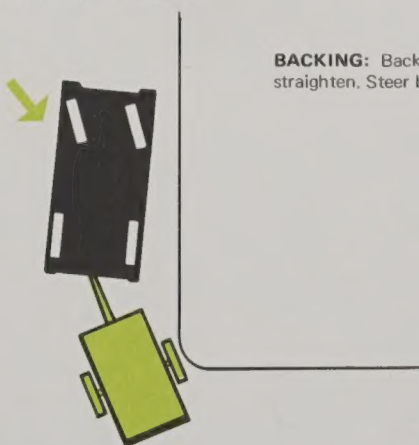
LEFT TURN: Check traffic. Signal. Proceed slowly. When you make your turn, drive well into intersection in order to swing wide, to allow for the trailer.

SLOWING, STOPPING: A sudden stop can jackknife your trailer or shift your load, so keep a greater distance than normally between you and the car ahead. Keep out of the fast lanes and maintain a speed that makes sudden stops and slow-ups unnecessary.

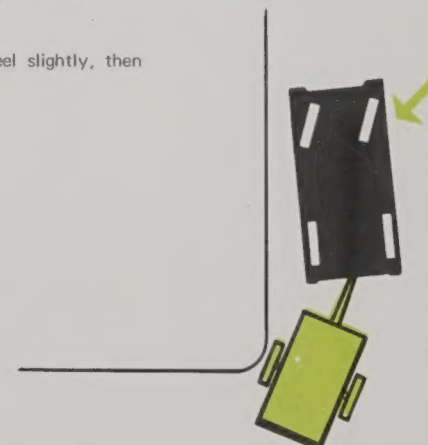
PASSING: When towing a trailer you can't accelerate as fast as without it. Then too your car plus trailer is much longer. Before you pass, make sure there's enough time and room for the manoeuvre. When you have passed, allow more room before you move back to your lane. Don't cut in and swerve...this can make your trailer swing and sway.

BEING PASSED: Help other drivers pass you where necessary. If you're holding up a line of traffic, the right thing to do is to signal, pull off, and let them pass.

If a large bus or transport passes you, air pressure may push the rear of your trailer to the right. Almost instantly, this pressure will push the front of your trailer. Be prepared to steer out of this situation. Accelerating a bit may help. Braking will not.



BACKING TO RIGHT: Turn front wheels of car to left...front end of trailer will go left, rear end will go right.



BACKING TO LEFT: Turn car wheels to right.